



**ENGINEERS
AUSTRALIA**
Western Australia
Division

BP Refinery Kwinana



Photo: BP Refinery Kwinana Ltd

**Historic Engineering Marker
Commemorative Plaque
Unveiling Ceremony**

Kwinana - Western Australia

**Tuesday 25 October 2005
Town of Kwinana Administration Centre
Cnr Gilmore Ave & Sulphur Rd**

PROGRAM

Welcome

Mayor Ken Jackman D.C.M.
Town of Kwinana

Introduction to the Plaquing Program

Tony Moulds MIEAust CPEng
Chairman, Engineering Heritage Panel
Engineers Australia, WA Division

History of the Refinery and Unveiling of the Commemorative Plaque

John Phillips FIEAust CPEng
Senior Vice President
Engineers Australia, WA Division

Acceptance of the Commemorative Plaque

Thys Heyns B Com (Hons) MBA
Managing Director
BP Refinery (Kwinana) Ltd

Thanks

Mayor Ken Jackman D.C.M.
Town of Kwinana

Morning Tea

KWINANA REFINERY

BP Kwinana Refinery has a significant place in the history and economy of Western Australia and the nation as a whole.

The refinery was the first industry to be built on the shore of Cockburn Sound.

The construction on a 'greenfields site' of a sophisticated 25 million oil refinery in two years, three and one half months ahead of schedule, was an impressive achievement by world standards. To achieve this with a multi national workforce peaking at 3500 and with most of the specialised equipment being imported, highlighted the success. The BP Kwinana Refinery was then the largest oil refinery in Australia and the only one on the west coast. Fifty years on it still holds that top position.

On January 29, 1953, the Premier, Sir Ross McLarty, turned the first piece of turf to symbolically inaugurate the start of construction.

Today the refinery employs a total staff of 300 which include trades people, civil, chemical, electrical and environmental engineers, process technicians, computer programmers and a wide range of support staff.

The replacement cost of the refinery assets is estimated to be A\$1.7 billion.

COCKBURN SOUND

Part of the extensive infrastructure development promised by the Western Australian Government was the dredging of a channel through Parmelia and Success Banks. The channels were to be dredged in three stages to a final depth of 38 feet [11.6m] below low water and were to be 500 feet [152m] wide at the bottom. Timing was tight and the first stage, to a depth of 34 feet [10.3m], was completed by 1 January 1955, in time for the arrival of the first tanker. The contract was completed by the end of 1955.

The opening up of the Sound also permitted many new industries requiring marine facilities to be established.

BUILDING A TOWNSHIP AND COMMUNITY

When the decision to build the refinery was taken, the Government of Western Australia immediately commenced planning a town site to initially house construction workers and ultimately plant operators.

Kwinana Townsite was formally gazetted in June 1953. Within its boundaries was the locality of Medina and it was here that the State Housing Commission handed over the first group of houses to BP in May 1953.

Medina continued to expand and further localities, Calista, Orelia and Parmelia, were developed around the Kwinana Town Centre.

A full range of social, commercial and recreational facilities were provided to serve employees of BP and other industries.

By April 1954 about 250 houses were occupied and the population had reached about 1000. Medina residents soon became a community and successfully lobbied to get better amenities for the district.

In the late 1950's and 1960's there was a large intake of British and European migrants attracted to opportunities as a result of Western Australia's rapidly expanding economy. Many of these newcomers settled in the Kwinana area.



Photos: BP Refinery Kwinana

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF BP KWINANA REFINERY

It would be difficult to overestimate the economic impact of the BP refinery on Western Australia's economy over the past fifty years. Over that time it has supplied virtually all of Western Australia's requirements for road, marine and aviation fuels, fuel for mining, power and agricultural industries, as well as bitumen for road surfacing.

Since 1955 the exploitation of Western Australia's massive mineral riches, including bauxite (alumina), iron ore, gold, nickel, oil and natural gas, coal and diamonds, has made the State a leading contributor to Australia's wealth creation.

These developments have required BP products to assist in providing the necessary infrastructure to construct, service and operate the mining facilities.

Equally important, the construction of the refinery and the opening up of Cockburn Sound to large vessels acted as a catalyst for substantial major industrial development in the Kwinana area. Alcoa World Alumina, BHP, Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd [wheat exporting] and the Fremantle Port Authority [bulk material handling] have all constructed jetties in the Sound. The Commonwealth Government has established a naval base at Garden Island and at Jervoise Bay, a thriving ship building and repair facility and oil platform construction site has been established.

A report published in 2002 listed 33 major industrial plants which have been established in the Kwinana industrial area up to that time.

In that year it was estimated that the Kwinana Refinery contributed one per cent of the Gross State Product and for the same year, Western Australia provided 26 % by value of Australia's total exports of goods and services.



COMMENCEMENT OF OPERATIONS

When the bow of the first tanker British Crusader sliced through a gaily decorated floating boom to enter a four mile [6.5 km] dredged channel through the Parmelia and Success Banks at 10.50am on 11 January 1955, Cockburn Sound was officially opened for large shipping.

By 12.15pm the tanker had berthed at the BP Kwinana jetty ready to discharge a cargo of 15,000 tons of crude oil.

On 1 February 1955, almost two years to the day after the start of construction, refinery Manager D. Barker pressed a button that started the refinery operating.

The Kwinana refinery officially went 'on stream' and oil products were, for the first time, flowing from one of the two crude oil distillation units.



THE OFFICAL OPENING - 50 YEARS AGO TODAY

The official opening of the refinery on 25 October 1955 was described by the local press as 'one of the happiest historic events ever staged in Western Australia'. Some 5000 guests arrived by bus and car to see the Governor General Sir William Slim unveil a plaque to declare the refinery open. Politicians of both sides of politics were present.

A change of government had occurred in 1953 and it was Labor Premier A. R. Hawke who presided at the refinery opening. However he praised the efforts of David Brand and Russell Dumas who were responsible for attracting the project to Western Australia.



Photo: BP Refinery Kwinana



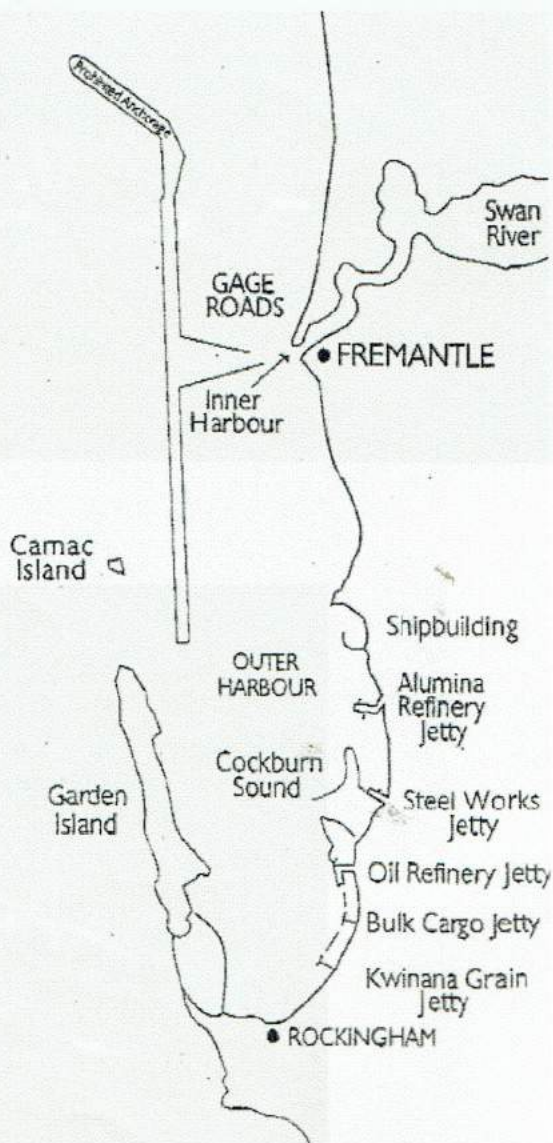
Photos: Fremantle Ports



INDIAN OCEAN

OUTER HARBOUR

BULK CARGOES
GRAIN
ALUMINA
MINERAL SANDS
FERTILISER PRODUCTS
PETROLEUM





HISTORIC ENGINEERING MARKER BP KWINANA OIL REFINERY

KELLOG INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION AND THE KWINANA CONSTRUCTION GROUP COMPLETED THIS REFINERY, THE LARGEST IN AUSTRALIA, FOR THE ANGLO-IRANIAN OIL COMPANY LIMITED IN 1955. IN 1952 - 1955 THE WA GOVERNMENT DREDGED AN 11.6 METRE DEEP CHANNEL THROUGH THE PARMELIA AND SUCCESS BANKS ALLOWING TANKERS AND OTHER LARGE VESSELS TO ACCESS COCKBURN SOUND. THE OIL REFINERY WAS THE FIRST MAJOR INDUSTRY IN THE KWINANA AREA AND HAS BEEN A PRINCIPAL FACTOR IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA OVER THE PAST 50 YEARS.

The Institution of Engineers Australia
BP Refinery (Kwinana) Pty Ltd 2005

